

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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MAN'S HEAVY HAND MORE DANGEROUS THAN LUNAR SOIL TO WILDLIFE, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT SCIENTIST BELIEVES

The earth's fish and wildlife have far less to fear from lunar contamination than from the heavy hand of man and his civilization, Interior Department scientist James Warren, a member of the Apollo 11 and 12 teams, believes.

"After examining lunar terrain," Warren said, "I concluded that many of man's activities on earth are introducing far more serious agents into the environment."

After finding that lunar soil brought back from the first manned moon landing was safe for wildlife, Warren, a biologist with Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, recommended to the Inter-Agency Committee on Back Contamination that lunar samples be released from quarantine for further study.

Warren headed one of several teams that investigated the effects of samples returned to earth during the historic Apollo 11 mission in July. He is remaining at NASA's Lunar Receiving Laboratory in Houston for the Apollo 12 flight.

Lunar materials had no detectable effect on animals that were exposed to them for 30 days, Warren reported. He says that the decision to release the samples from Houston is enabling preeminent scientists around the world to make additional studies.

Warren's team worked with species ranging from small protozoans to flatworms, oysters, shrimp and fathead and mummichog minnows.

The procedure for Apollo 12 will be much the same, except that guppies will be substituted for fathead minnows because they are less susceptible to disinfectant chemicals such as chlorine.

In the meantime, there is plenty of work to do. Premises must be cleaned, maintenance performed and animals given care.

It looks like a long time before Warren, 35, will return home to the hatchery laboratory in Genoa, Wis., but he calls his experiences with the lunar materials the "most exciting" of his life.

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